

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: N.A.

TAGS: IA/ECOSOC, OAS, EGEN

SUBJECT: TWELFTH IA-ECOSOC MINISTERIAL MEETING

REF: STATE 82498 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: ANNUAL IA-ECOSOC MEETING ENDED APRIL 16 WITHOUT GENERATING MUCH SERIOUS OR EVEN LIVELY DEBATE. A DECLARATION OF CIES WAS ADOPTED, WITH 22 FAVORABLE VOTES, NONE OPPOSED, AND U.S. ABSTAINING, IMPLICITLY CRITICIZING THE LINKING OF HUMAN RIGHTS CRITERIA TO THE DECISIONS OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCING INSTITUTIONS. TWO RESOLUTIONS ALSO PASSED BY 22-0-1 (U.S.), ONE REITERATING REQUEST THAT GSP EXCLUSION OF ECUADOR AND VENEZUELA BE REPEALED, THE OTHER IN FORM OF A MODERATELY WORDED CATALOGUE OF ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES FACING THE REGION. NO ONE MENTIONED PRESIDENT CARTER'S OMITTING ANY REFERENCE TO THE OPEC EX-
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CLUSION FROM GSP IN HIS SPEECH. REOPENING OF THE GENERAL DEBATE TO COMMENT ON PRESIDENT'S SPEECH, AS FORESEEN REFTEL, NEVER MATERIALIZED. IN FACT THERE WAS LITTLE REFERENCE TO IT AT ALL DURING THE TWO DAYS OF IA-ECOSOC THAT FOLLOWED THE SPEECH. SUCH COMMENT AS DID OCCUR WAS QUITE RESERVED. ANOTHER NON-TOPIC WAS THE PROPOSED SPECIAL OASGA ON COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. WEEK LONG IA-ECOSOC MEETING IN WASHINGTON ATTRACTED VERY FEW RANKING DELEGATES, AND ASIDE FROM MORE CEREMONIAL SESSIONS WAS CONDUCTED FOR THE MOST PART BY STAFF MEMBERS OF PERMANENT MISSIONS TO THE OAS. MEXICO WAS NOTABLE EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE, AND MEXICAN DELEGATION PROVIDED DRAFT RESOLUTION THAT LED TO PRINCIPAL SUBSTANTIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE MEETING. THIS RESOLUTION, ADDRESSING CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICITS, DEBT SERVICE BURDENS, LIQUIDITY PROBLEMS, INFLATIONARY PRESSURES, TERMS OF TRADE DETERIORATION, FOOD PRODUCTION SHORTFALLS, AND LATIN AMERICA'S DECLINING SHARE OF OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCING, IS REASONABLE AND NON-POLEMIC, AS WAS THE DEBATE CONCERNING IT. U.S. DELEGATION EXPLAINED ITS ABSTENTION AS NECESSITATED BY POLICY DISAGREEMENT WITH SOME OF ITS PROPOSALS, SUCH AS OFFSETTING ANY EROSION OF GSP CAUSED BY MTN, AND PROMOTING PRODUCER ASSOCIATIONS (E.G., OPEC), EVEN THOUGH WE AGREE WITH OTHER PROPOSALS SUCH AS AIDING EXPORT PROMOTION AND ENCOURAGING FOREIGN INVESTMENT.

2. U.S. ALSO ABSTAINED FROM SHORT, ROUTINE RESOLUTION ON OPEC EXCLUSION OF ECUADOR AND VENEZUELA FROM FRUITS OF GSP. ASIDE FROM RITUAL SET PIECE COMMENTS BY TWO COUNTRIES AFFECTED, THIS ITEM ATTRACTED NO DEBATE AND NO DELEGATE MENTIONED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER DID NOT REFER TO OPEC EXCLUSION OF VENEZUELA AND ECUADOR IN HIS SPEECH.

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3. DECLARATION OF CIES STATES THAT ACTIONS OF IFI'S SHOULD "BE KEPT INDEPENDENT OF SUCH CONSIDERATIONS OF ANY NATURE AS MAY BE IN CONFLICT WITH THE INTERNATIONALLY-ACCEPTED OBJECTIVE CRITERIA AND WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE STATUTES OR CONSTITUTIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS." THIS FINAL TEXT IS GREATLY WATERED DOWN VERSION OF ORIGINAL ARGENTINE/URUGUAYAN DRAFT THAT STATED BLUNTLY THAT POLITICAL FACTORS SHOULD NOT AFFECT IFI OPERATIONS. LATIN AND CARIBBEAN CAUCUS PRODUCED FINAL VERSION SO MILD THAT EVEN COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, MEXICO, VENEZUELA, AND ENGLISH SPEAKING CARIBBEANS WERE ABLE TO SUPPORT IT. U.S. ABSTENTION BASED ON UNCERTAINTY WHETHER DECLARATION WOULD PRECLUDE DONOR NATIONS FROM APPLYING THEIR OWN POLICIES IN DEALINGS WITH BANKS. PHRASE "HUMAN RIGHTS" WAS NOT UTTERED DURING BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE DECLARATION.

4. OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST INCLUDED SOME ATTENTION TO TRADE QUESTIONS, WITH LATINS, LED BY PANAMANIAN COMMERCE

MINISTER SOSA, OFFERING PREDICTABLE ARGUMENTS IN LOW KEY FASHION. GUATEMALA TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OCCASION TO CALL

FOR, AND RECEIVE, LATIN SOLIDARITY IN ITS DISPUTE WITH FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION. AT ONE POINT, WITH REFERENCE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S SPEECH, DISCUSSION TURNED MOMENTARILY TO RELEVANT SUBJECT OF TREATMENT OF U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN GLOBAL NORTH-SOUTH CONTEXT, IN REGIONAL FORUMS, AND IN BILATERAL DEALINGS. BRIEF DEBATE WAS HARDLY THOROUGH OR CONCLUSIVE, BUT CONSENSUS SEEMED TO LEAN TOWARD FAVORING GLOBAL APPROACH WITH A "TILT" TOWARD HEMISPHERIC INTERESTS. ANOTHER OF THE FEW ALLUSIONS TO PRESIDENT'S SPEECH OCCURRED IN CLOSING SESSION, WHEN ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR, AS CHAIRMAN, IN SHORT STATEMENT ENDING THE MEETING REFERRED APPROVINGLY TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S SUGGESTION THAT LATIN AMERICA HAS A THIRD WORLD LEADERSHIP ROLE. ALTHOUGH ASSIS-

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TANT SECRETARY TODMAN HAD INVITED COMMENTS ON THE SPECIAL OASGA ON COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT, NO DELEGATION MADE MORE THAN PASSING REFERENCE TO IT.

5. COMMENT: CLEARLY VERY MODEST EXPECTATIONS FOR THIS IA-ECOSOC MEETING WERE NOT EXCEEDED. PRESIDENT'S SPEECH EVIDENTLY GAVE OTHER MEMBER COUNTRIES THINGS TO PONDER, WHICH DELEGATES IN ATTENDANCE DID NOT FEEL QUALIFIED TO EXPRESS OPINIONS ON. PRESUMABLY U.S. COULD REKINDLE INTEREST IN A SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT GA BY INDICATING WE HAVE SERIOUS INTEREST IN IT, WHICH WOULD LEAD OTHERS TO EXPECT IMPORTANT NEW PROGRAMS. AS IT IS, WAIT AND SEE ATTITUDE ON U.S.-LATIN ECONOMIC RELATIONS MAY CONTINUE FOR YET A WHILE UNTIL OUR POLICIES ARE MORE CLEARLY DRAWN AND UNDERSTOOD.

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